Howl’s Moving Castle



**Author:** Dianna Wynne Jones (1986)-British author

**Trilogy:** *Howl’s Moving Castle*, *Castle in the Air*, & *House of Many Ways*

Fantasy Novel, Coming of Age Novel, Problem Novel, Heroine’s Journey

**Themes:** You are not tied to destiny; Magic is not always good or evil; You can’t judge a book by its cover; Your identity is based on how you see yourself; The importance of family; The heart is valuable

**Summary:** Sophie Hatter, the eldest of 3 sisters knows there is little future for her. Her middle sister Lettie is the beautiful one, and her youngest sister Martha is destined for fortune. When there are three siblings, it’s always the youngest who succeeds. Sophie, although pretty, is very plain, and she has resigned herself to taking over her family’s hat shop. Little does Sophie know that she has talents of her own. She can speak to hats and other objects and grant them powers. After a chance conversation with the evil wizard Howl, whom she hears eats girl’s hearts, she has drawn the attention of the heartless, jealous Witch of the Waste. She is cursed by her and turned into a ninety-year-old woman unable to tell anyone she is cursed. She sets off unable to face her family, until she reaches Howl’s ominous moving castle. There she meets a fire demon Calcifer, who immediately recognizes the spell. In exchange for lifting her curse, she has to help him break a pact he has made with the self-absorbed wizard Howl. Will she succeed? **Read to find out!**

**Characters:** **Protagonist:** Sophie: a teenage girl cursed by the Witch of the Waste to become 90 **Antagonist:** Witch of the Waste: A youthful witch who hasn’t aged because of a fire demon **Howl:** a wizard with a castle accessing many locations supposedly eats the hearts of young girls **Calcifer:** A fire demon with a pact with Howl that Sophie is trying to break

**Film :** 2004 Release: Anime Style; Directed by Hayao Mizaki (Other films include *Princess Mononoke, Spirted Away*); Japanese Subtitles (Sub) ;Dub: English; Nominated for Academy Award for **Best Animated Feature**; 8.2/10 IMDB; 87% Freshness Rotten Tomatoes Rated: PG

**English Cast Sophie:** Emily Mortimer; Jean Simmons **Howl:** Christian Bale **Calcifer:** Billy Crystal **Witch of the Waste**: Laren Bacall

**Cinematic Features:** Distance Shots for Beauty; Closeups of Sophie for aging; Costume; Makeup; Disguise

**Differences:** Setting; Plot; Characters; Chance Encounter with Howl; Howl’s Change in Humanity; Castle Structure

**Methods For Teaching**

**Multiliteraces:** Character/ Theme Song Connections *Stop Dragggin’ My Heart Around*: Tom Petty and Stevie Nicks ;*Congratulations*: Traveling Wilburys; *Pretty Woman*: Roy Orbison; *You’re So Vain*: Carly Simon; **Choose your own song**

Videos; Text Messages Between Characters; Character Comparisons; Personal Connections: Where would your doors lead; Fairy Tale Comparisons; Teaching About Manga; Predict Futures; Read Selection of Castle in the Air

**Citations:**

Jones, D. W. (1986). *Howl's moving castle*. London: HarperCollins Children's

Mizaki , H (Director). (2004). *Howl’s Moving Castle* [Motion Picture]. Japan, United States. Disney: Studio Ghibli Film

